

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN
SOUTHERN DIVISION

ROBERT HAL VICKERY,

Plaintiff,

v.

Case Number: 11-cv-10797
Honorable Marianne O. Battani

MARGIE LOVE, et.al.,

Defendants.

**OPINION AND ORDER SUMMARILY DISMISSING COMPLAINT
AND CONCLUDING THAT AN APPEAL CANNOT BE TAKEN IN GOOD FAITH**

I. INTRODUCTION

This is a civil rights action brought by a state prisoner pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983. The Court has granted Plaintiff, Robert Hal Vickery, leave to proceed *in forma pauperis*. Under the Prison Litigation Reform Act, Pub.L. No. 104-134, 110 Stat. 1321 (1996), the Court is required to dismiss any prisoner action brought under federal law if the Complaint is frivolous, malicious, fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted, or seeks monetary relief from a defendant immune from such relief. 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e)(2), 1915A; 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(c). The Court must read Plaintiff's *pro se* Complaint indulgently, *see Haines v. Kerner*, 404 U.S. 519, 520 (1972), and accept Plaintiff's allegations as true, unless they are clearly irrational or wholly incredible. *Denton v. Hernandez*, 504 U.S. 25, 33 (1992).

Plaintiff, an inmate at the St. Clair County Intervention Center in Port Huron, Michigan, filed this civil rights action naming Margie Love as a Defendant. Plaintiff also claims that he is suing other Defendants but fails to name them.

In his *pro se* Complaint, Plaintiff alleges that, while incarcerated at the St. Clair County Jail, he was denied medical treatment for his (1) “dry and bleeding sinuses,” (2) “dry and [chafing] feet,” and (3) “constant headaches.” Plaintiff’s Complaint, 3. Plaintiff states that he was treated at the facility but is displeased with the treatment. He was seen by a doctor and a nurse and given saline solution for his sinus condition and lotion for his feet. Plaintiff alleges that he was not seen for his headaches. He contends that, because of the “non-treatment,” he is now unnecessarily suffering. He is seeking monetary damages.

Having reviewed the Complaint, the Court dismisses it for failure to state a claim upon which relief may be granted. The Court also concludes that an Appeal cannot be taken in good faith.

II. DISCUSSION

A complaint fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted when it is clear that no relief could be granted under any set of facts that could be proved consistent with the allegations of the complaint. *Jones v. City of Carlisle*, 3 F.3d 945, 947 (6th Cir. 1993). To state a claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, a plaintiff must allege the violation of a right secured by the federal Constitution or laws and must show that the deprivation was committed by a person acting under color of state law. *West v. Atkins*, 487 U.S. 42, 48 (1988); *Street v. Corr. Corp. of Am.*, 102 F.3d 810, 814 (6th Cir. 1996). Because § 1983 is a method for vindicating federal rights, not a source of substantive rights itself, the first step in an action under § 1983 is to identify the specific constitutional right allegedly infringed. *Albright v. Oliver*, 510 U.S. 266, 271 (1994).

Plaintiff’s claims fall under the Eighth Amendment. The Eighth Amendment prohibits the infliction of cruel and unusual punishment against those convicted of crimes. U.S. Const.

amend. VIII. The Eighth Amendment obligates prison authorities to provide medical care to incarcerated individuals, as a failure to provide such care would be inconsistent with contemporary standards of decency. *Estelle v. Gamble*, 429 U.S. 102, 103-04 (1976). The Eighth Amendment is violated when a prison official is deliberately indifferent to the serious medical needs of a prisoner. *Id.* at 104-05; *Comstock v. McCrary*, 273 F.3d 693, 702 (6th Cir. 2001).

A claim for the deprivation of adequate medical care has an objective and a subjective component. *Farmer v. Brennan*, 511 U.S. 825, 834 (1994). To satisfy the objective component, the plaintiff must allege that the medical need at issue is sufficiently serious. *Id.* In other words, the inmate must show that he is incarcerated under conditions posing a substantial risk of serious harm. *Id.* The objective component of the adequate medical care test is satisfied “[w]here the seriousness of a prisoner’s needs for medical care is obvious even to a lay person.” *Blackmore v. Kalamazoo County*, 390 F.3d 890, 899 (6th Cir. 2004). If, however the need involves “minor maladies or non-obvious complaints of a serious need for medical care,” *Blackmore*, 390 F.3d at 898, the inmate must “place verifying medical evidence in the record to establish the detrimental effect of the delay in medical treatment.” *Napier v. Madison County, Ky.*, 238 F.3d 739, 742 (6th Cir. 2001) (citing *Hill v. Dekalb Regional Youth Detention Center*, 40 F.3d 1176, 1188 (11th Cir. 1994)).

The subjective component requires an inmate to show that prison officials have “a sufficiently culpable state of mind in denying medical care.” *Brown v. Bargery*, 207 F.3d 863, 867 (6th Cir. 2000) (citing *Farmer*, 511 U.S. at 834). Deliberate indifference “entails something more than mere negligence,” *Farmer*, 511 U.S. at 835, but can be “satisfied by something less

than acts or omissions for the very purpose of causing harm or with knowledge that harm will result.” *Id.* Under *Farmer*, “the official must both be aware of facts from which the inference could be drawn that a substantial risk of serious harm exists, and he must also draw the inference.” *Id.* at 837.

Not every claim by a prisoner that he has received inadequate medical treatment states a violation of the Eighth Amendment. *Estelle*, 429 U.S. at 105. As the Supreme Court explained:

[A]n inadvertent failure to provide adequate medical care cannot be said to constitute an unnecessary and wanton infliction of pain or to be repugnant to the conscience of mankind. Thus, a complaint that a physician has been negligent in diagnosing or treating a medical condition does not state a valid claim of medical mistreatment under the Eighth Amendment. Medical malpractice does not become a constitutional violation merely because the victim is a prisoner. In order to state a cognizable claim, a prisoner must allege acts or omissions sufficiently harmful to evidence deliberate indifference to serious medical needs.

Estelle, 429 U.S. at 105-06 (quotations omitted). Thus, differences in judgment between an inmate and prison medical personnel regarding the appropriate medical diagnoses or treatment are not enough to state a deliberate indifference claim. *Sanderfer v. Nichols*, 62 F.3d 151, 154-55 (6th Cir. 1995); *Ward v. Smith*, No. 95-6666, 1996 WL 627724, at *1 (6th Cir. Oct.29, 1996). This is so even if there is an inadequate course of treatment and considerable suffering. *Gabehart v. Chapleau*, No. 96-5050, 1997 WL 160322, at *2 (6th Cir. Apr.4, 1997).

The Sixth Circuit distinguishes “between cases where the complaint alleges a complete denial of medical care and those cases where the claim is that a prisoner received inadequate medical treatment.” *Westlake v. Lucas*, 537 F.2d 857, 860 n. 5 (6th Cir. 1976). Where, as here, “a prisoner has received some medical attention and the dispute is over the adequacy of the treatment, federal courts are generally reluctant to second guess medical judgments and to constitutionalize claims which sound in state tort law.” *Id.*; *Brock v. Crall*, No. 00-5914, 2001

WL 468169, at *2 (6th Cir. Apr.27, 2001); *Jones v. Martin*, No. 00-1522, 2001 WL 223859, at *1 (6th Cir. Feb.28, 2001); *Gabehart*, 1997 WL 160322, at *2.

As noted, Plaintiff's complaints in this case are with regard to the specific treatment received, and that does not support an Eighth Amendment claim. Therefore, his Complaint is subject to summary dismissal.

III. CONCLUSION

Having conducted the review now required by the Prison Litigation Reform Act, the Court determines that Plaintiff's action will be dismissed for failure to state a claim pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e)(2) and 1915A(b), and 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(c). The Court must next decide whether an appeal of this action would be in good faith within the meaning of 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(3). *See McGore v. Wrigglesworth*, 114 F.3d 601, 611 (6th Cir. 1997). For the same reasons that the Court dismisses the action, the Court discerns no good-faith basis for an appeal.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

DATED: March 9, 2011

s/Marianne O. Battani
MARIANNE O. BATTANI
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on the above date a copy of this Opinion and Order was served upon the Petitioner, Robert Vickery via ordinary U.S. Mail.

s/Bernadette M. Thebolt

Case Manager